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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 000216

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: A DETAILED GUIDE TO YEREVAN'S MAY 31 MUNICIPAL ELECTION  
MECHANICS

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(U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

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YEREVAN CITY COUNCIL ELECTION  
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¶1. (SBU) The Law on Local Self-Governance in Yerevan was passed by the National Assembly on December 26, 2008, and created the framework for the pre-election period, election, and post-election day procedures. This cable summarizes those provisions. The new law provides for a new City Council of 65 elected members selected from party lists (proportional representation). The minimum threshold for a party to win seats in the Yerevan City Council is seven percent of votes cast (nine percent for registered multi-party coalitions). If one political party or bloc receives a plurality with more than 40 percent of the vote, but less than an absolute majority, extra "bonus" seats are allocated to that party or bloc to establish an absolute majority of Council seats (33 of 65 seats).

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YEREVAN MAYOR'S ELECTION  
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¶2. (SBU) The Mayor should be elected during the first session of the City Council, which is due on Monday following the announcement of the official election results (June 8). If any political party or bloc receives more than 50 percent of the 65 seats in the City Council (after the "bonus" seats are awarded to a 40-plus percent plurality winner), then the first person on that party list automatically becomes the Yerevan Mayor -- unless s/he withdraws from consideration.

¶3. (SBU) If no party or bloc receives more than 50 percent of the seats, then the mayor must be elected by secret vote of the city council. The council will follow the same procedure in the event that a party wins an absolute majority but the number one candidate on the party list withdraws from the mayorship. Council factions may only nominate mayoral candidates from their party lists working top-down. For instance, if the top candidate on the list refuses to be nominated, then the party may only nominate the next candidate down on its party list, unless that person also withdraws from consideration, in which case it moves down to the next spot. Individuals do not relinquish their council seats simply by declining to serve as mayor.

¶4. (SBU) The candidate receiving the majority of votes of all council members is elected mayor. In the event that none of the candidates receives more than 50 percent of votes, then the leading two candidates will run in a second round. An unopposed mayoral candidate must still obtain the positive votes of 40 percent of the council to win the mayorship -- unless his/her party won a majority of seats, triggering the automatic conferral of the mayorship.

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TO-DOS FOR PARTIES AND BLOCS CONTESTING THE ELECTION  
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15. (SBU) Parties and blocs wishing to participate in the May 31 Yerevan City Council Election had to apply to the Central Election Commission (CEC) by March 22, at 6:00pm. The CEC should verify the submitted lists and register them from April 26 to May 1. In case there are inaccuracies in the lists, the CEC should provide 48 hours to the corresponding party or bloc to correct the errors. Campaigning is allowed from May 2 through midnight May 29 (overnight of May 29/30). Public opinion poll results about candidates' ratings cannot be published from midnight May 23 (overnight May 23/24) until 8:00 pm on the voting day (at close of polls). Parties and blocs can withdraw from the race by May 21.

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ELECTION PREPARATION AT ELECTION COMMISSIONS  
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16. (SBU) Polling stations must be formed by April 16. On April 21 the voter registration office (OVIR) provides polling stations with the printed version of preliminary voter lists for posting in the premise on the same day, and provides the electronic versions of the lists to Territorial Election Commissions (TECs). Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) are formed from May 5 to May 8 and conduct their first session on May 9, at 12:00 noon.

17. (SBU) From May 26-28 the CEC will provide the Territorial Election Commissions with PEC stamps, and on May 29 OVIR will provide TECs with the electronic copy of the final voter lists. The same day TECs should provide PEC chairmen with 2 printed copies of the final voter lists, one in the form of a journal and the other to be posted outside the polling station, which should be done the same day. Ballot papers are printed on May 22-28. PECs receive ballot papers, stamps and envelopes from TECs on May 30, and sign all the ballot papers and all pages of voter lists the same day. On election day PECs should start their session at 7:00 am. Voting hours are from 8:00am - 8:00pm.

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VOTERS  
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18. (SBU) Voters should be notified about the date and place of the vote by May 28. Before May 10, voters with temporary Yerevan registration can apply to their community (neighborhood) executive to be included in the voter list, or they can apply with that request to OVIR by May 16. Appeals to eliminate inaccuracies in voter lists or to add names should be submitted to the community executive by May 24 or OVIR by May 26. In addition, voters can check their names on voter lists on the CEC website: [www.elections.am](http://www.elections.am)

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SUMMATION OF RESULTS  
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19. (SBU) Results of PEC protocols should be ready and publicized on June 1 by 6:00am. All election-related materials should be submitted to TECs on June 1 by 8:00am. The CEC should publicize preliminary results of the vote on June 1 by 8:00pm. Applications for recounts must be submitted to TECs by 2:00pm June 1 (the day after election day). Recounts (if any are requested) must be conducted between 9:00am June 2 and 2:00pm June 5. The CEC must publicize the final election results by June 7.

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ELECTION OBSERVATION  
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110. (SBU) Organizations wishing to observe the election should apply to the CEC by May 21. The Council of Europe and the largest domestic monitoring organization, "It's Your Choice," have each expressed intentions to supply observers. The Embassy has communicated its desire for observer credentials to the CEC Chairman and to the Foreign Ministry.

PENNINGTON